

2016

# Referral to Employment Supports

Survey Report



Employment and Labour Market Workgroup  
Toronto North Local Immigration Partnership  
7/8/2016



## ***“Referral to Employment Supports” Survey Report***

### **Introduction**

The Toronto North Local Immigration Partnership always aims to foster a learning culture and cross-agency collaboration, and to support enhanced and coordinated service delivery among its partner agencies. To provide the agencies with the updated community-based information and to support their strategic planning, the Employment and Labour Market Workgroup of surveyed its member organizations with the intention to:

1. Explore existing employment supports for internationally trained professionals and to identify gaps within these programs
2. Identify employer engagement practices used by employment service providers; and
3. Identify available employment support services and gaps from the perspective of seniors, LGBTQ, persons with mental and physical disabilities, and other vulnerable groups

In addition to the areas mentioned above, the survey explores the employee learning capacity and learning needs of the member agencies. The responses generated through these questions will inform the Toronto North LIP’s action -planning.

The survey was completed by 33 individuals of managerial and front-line levels from 8 partner agencies represented by the employment and settlement sectors. The survey consists of both qualitative and quantitative data.

### **Summary**

#### ***Employment Support Programs***

Most respondents are familiar with and refer their clients to the employment support programs such as ELT, OSLT, Bridging, Mentorship and Internship programs. However, referring clients to **Professional Immigrant Networks** does not seem to be a common place practice among service providers. To learn more about PINs, please visit the following link: <http://www.networksforimmigrants.ca/join-us/partners>

#### ***Recommended areas for enhancement in employment support program***

Forty- four percent of the employees serving newcomers thought that internship/placement should become an integral part of these employment support programs. These programs provide newcomers with Canadian experience and are a link to their smooth integration into the Canadian workplace.

***Competency of front-line employees regarding employment support programs***

Forty- three percent of the front-line respondents do not feel sufficiently confident or well-informed about employment support programs for newcomers in order to provide necessary information/referral to clients.

***Gaps in professional development***

Thirty percent of the respondents indicated that they do not have opportunities to attend training, workshop, and information sessions. The majority of these employees (70%) miss professional development opportunities due to the lack of time, and (30%) miss due to the lack of information.

Almost all employees (97%) are interested in receiving training, professional development and networking opportunities and 79% of these respondents would like to attend training sessions relating to knowledge enhancement of employment preparation programs.

***Knowledge about employment support services for seniors, LGBTQ, persons with disabilities***

Only 27% percent of respondents identified existing employment support services for these groups of clients. Seventy three percent of the respondents either did not know or were not sure about the services available to the individuals belonging to these groups.

Please find the detailed report consisting of qualitative and quantitate data below.

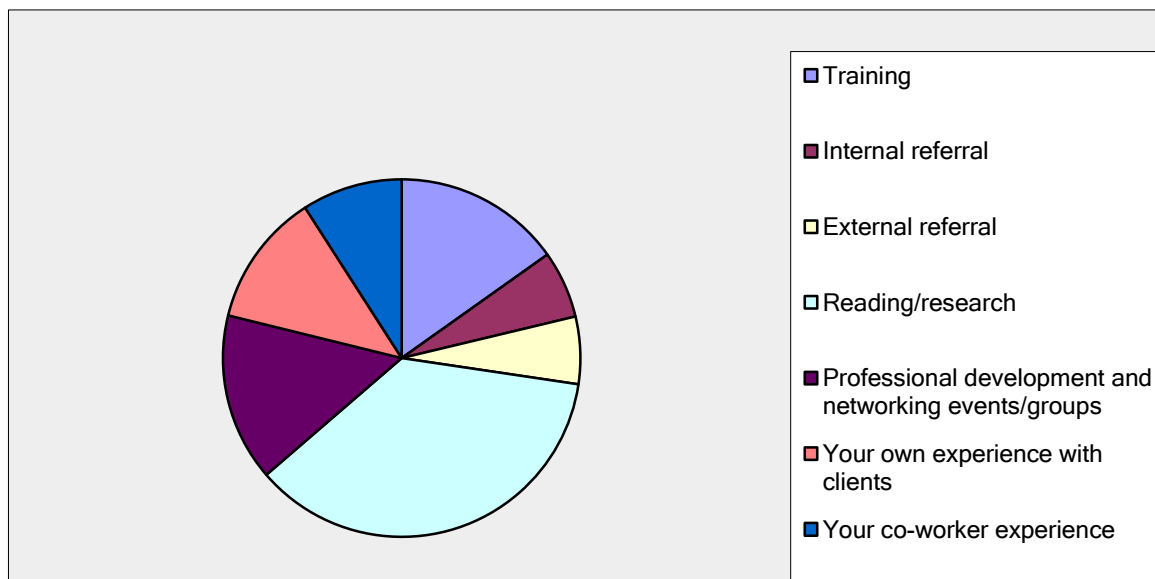
**Q1. The programs below have been developed to better support internationally trained professionals. Please list the programs and agencies in every category to which you refer your clients:**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Enhanced Language Training (e.g. Financial Services by TDSB)	87.9%	29
Occupation Specific Language Training (e.g. Health Care; Technology by Seneca)	78.8%	26
Bridging programs (e.g. IPLAN for architects by JVS; IWES for IT/ICT professionals by ICTC)	84.8%	28
Mentorship (e.g. TRIEC Mentoring Partnership, NYCH Stepping Stones to Leadership)	75.8%	25
Internship (e.g. Career Edge, Employer Incentive Program)	66.7%	22
Professional Immigrant Networks (e.g. TRIEC PINS, Association of Filipino Canadian Accountants)	48.5%	16
Other	15.2%	5
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>33</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>0</b>

The information collected through the question 1 in combination with further research was used to generate inventories of employment supports available to newcomers in Toronto North. Two inventories, on mentorship and on internship programs available to newcomers in GTA, have been collated and shared with the partner agencies. The resource listing existing OSLT, ELT, and Bridging programs is being collated and will be shared soon.

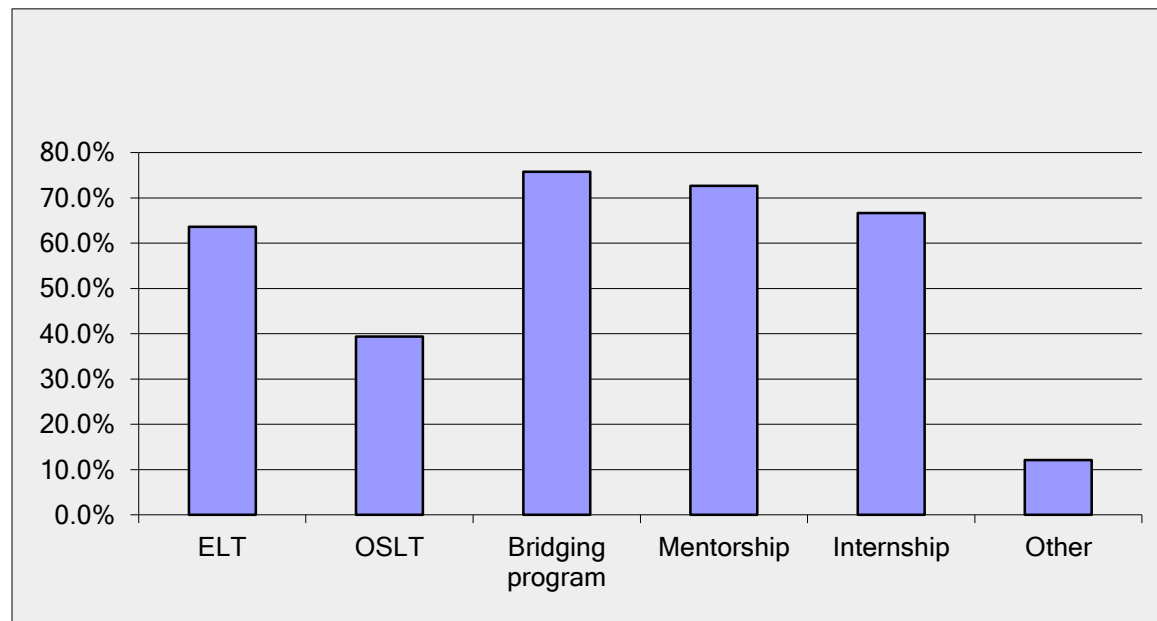
**Q2. How do you learn about various employment support services for internationally trained professionals? Please check all that apply:**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Training	15.2%	5
Internal referral	6.1%	2
External referral	6.1%	2
Reading/research	36.4%	12
Professional development and networking events/groups	15.2%	5
Your own experience with clients	12.1%	4
Your co-worker's experience	9.1%	3
Other (please specify)		13
<i>answered question</i>		<b>33</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>0</b>



**Q3. Which of these employment preparation programs for newcomers do you think work well and why?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
ELT	63.6%	21
OSLT	39.4%	13
Bridging program	75.8%	25
Mentorship	72.7%	24
Internship	66.7%	22
Other	12.1%	4
Please share why you believe the selected employment preparation program works well:		23
<b>answered question</b>		<b>33</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>0</b>



	Comments:
1	Bridging programs help IEP's gain job readiness skills and connections with industry professionals and employers
2	ELT programs let newcomers know more about workplace culture and communication skills. Give them access to work place experiences
3	Internships help them to gain the much-needed Canadian work experience that employers look for
4	Through mentorships newcomer clients obtain information from people in the field. It is a great networking opportunity

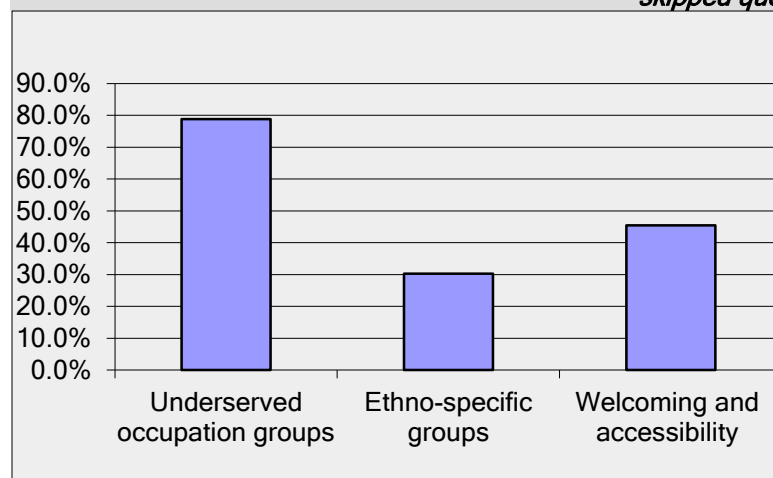
5	Mentorship programs work best in terms of successful outcomes
6	They all are in response to certain elements in newcomer's life and needs. Each has their own merits and demerits but necessary.
7	Each program is beneficial and depends on the needs of the clients being served. For clients that could benefit from continuing to enhance their English language skill then the ELT and OSLT programs are suitable as it provides an opportunity to enhance their language skills as well as becoming familiar with the terminology and workplace environment for their industry. ELT programs provide an opportunity for clients to gain hands on work experience and assists to build valuable experiences on their resumes and work references. The Bridging and internship programs provide valuable experiences for clients who may benefit more from work placement opportunities and professional development and industry specific training needed for employment. The mentoring programs provide support to clients that need support with making connections within the field and can assist with building their networks as well as confidence with job searching and especially the hidden job market.
8	These preparation programs work well for newcomers because it is a boost for them to build their network, become familiar with the Canadian work place culture, and become knowledgeable in terms of what paths and strategies are available to follow their desired career path.
9	I think all of these programs are useful. It depends on where clients are in his/her individual job search process. Clients, who are job ready, need upgrading for licensing and have higher proficiency in English found bridging programs more useful while others found ELT and OSLT more useful. Internship and mentoring could be ongoing programs that clients can take part in while they work or involve in other trainings. All of these programs cater need of different clients and they are essential resource for newcomer community.
10	Language and Canadian experience are the top two barriers new immigrants have to get employment. These programs help new immigrants in improving English and building network.
11	Bridging Programs: offers more services such as mentorship, job searching strategies and placements to name a few. I find that this service makes my clients feel more equipped for their profession. Mentorship programs have really helped my clients build upon their networks and provide the one on one interaction that they desire. Many of my clients have landed jobs through mentorship services.
12	Internships provide real Canadian experience 2) Pay some money to make the two ends meet 3) More than anything Newcomers would feel that their skills and knowledge can be of some value. This raises self-confidence and paves the way for further success.
13	Bridging, Internship--provide practical experience in Canada

**Q4. Based on your professional experience and feedback from your clients, please list some recommendations on how these programs could be strengthened? Please list the programs and the areas:**

	Comments	Response percentage
2	<b>Quality mentorship programs , more paid Internship opportunities, opportunity to network with employers</b>	<b>64 %</b>
3	More in-house training for staff	
4	It would help if Bridging programs could be done by few more agencies as opposed to a selective few	
5	We need to have better support for getting our clients' credentials evaluated	
6	JSW is the first step for job searching, but clients need more opportunity to gain Canadian experience. Some ELT programs are no longer providing placement opportunity	
7	The mentorship programs could be strengthened by introducing indicators for evaluation, e.g. number of new professional contacts established, number of informational interviews referred to, etc.	
8	Some ELT programs provide support with pre-employment workshops however may not provide an work placement component. The feedback received from clients and also from assessing their needs demonstrates that clients could benefit especially from the work placement experience. The work placement component provides clients with valuable work experiences to address concerns both from clients and potential employers about Canadian work experience. As well, the placement assists clients with strengthening their skills, familiarity with procedures and processes that may differ from their own experiences and also enhance their transferable skills. Clients self-esteem and confidence are also enhanced and the concern about lack of references is addressed.	
9	These programs can be helpful if we really do the good need assessment and do the best referral	
10	Flexibilities in program schedule, methods to attend, etc	
11	They could be more available throughout the year. more job placements would be great as well. Some of my clients have mentioned that the training is too long	
12	1) Availability and Accessibility of Bridging program should be improved. Currently the competition is high and chances of securing these opportunities are minimal. Reallocate adequate resources and enhance the bridging program. 2) All the bridging programs that I know of are in IT, Finance/Accounting, Social Workers, Architects etc. but none for Scientists (Chemist, Biologists, Physicists). Please find a way to include these groups of Foreign Trained Professionals in bridging programs.	
13	Better partnerships with agencies--Not a competitive but a collaborative approach. We are each too focused on numbers and what is best for our OWN agencies and the client is secondary. Let's change the priorities here.	
14	Childminding is necessary as most of the program do not provide childcare support.	

**Q5. Please identify areas in which employment preparation programs for newcomers could be enhanced.**  
**Please select all that apply:**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Underserved occupation groups	78.8%	26
Ethno-specific groups	30.3%	10
Welcoming and accessibility	45.5%	15
Other (please specify)		8
<b>answered question</b>		<b>33</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>0</b>



	Comments:
1	Professional trained doctors are too hard to get into the field. They need more resource and financial support to get their license.
2	Additional programs for clients with a healthcare background which could provide training and enhancement of their transferrable skills to access non-regulated healthcare opportunities. An expansion of programs for financial services sector which has diverse occupational areas (Portfolio managers, investment managers, project coordinators). Program opportunities for newcomers to address the needs who may have been out of the workforce for an extended period of time (stay at home mothers) or lack work experience as their focus was on post-secondary education. Some of the current program criteria focus on specific number of years of work experience needed to access the program.
3	I do not think ethno-specific groups should be encouraged, in oppose ethno groups, more diverse groups where newcomers can mingle with local people should be created and encouraged.
4	1)Conduct Regular Orientation Sessions sometimes with mandatory attendance: Around some settlement and mostly employment. 2) Stretch the dates of delivery of the Job Search Workshop: Currently the job search workshop is so compact that newcomers have to process a lot of information within a short period of time. Time and again Newcomers have given a feedback to elongate the delivery days. 3) Don't mistake the menu for the meal; The workshop is just informative sessions but not real job search. After the workshop newcomers should be followed with a strict plan/structure and guidance.
5	Direct partnerships with provincial licensing bodies in regulated professions.
6	to work with employers and get connections for more meaningful positions
7	Follow-up support after the program is finished and supports before and after as well (wrap-around supports). Otherwise it might be difficult to stay on course as there are lots of challenges outside of the program itself.

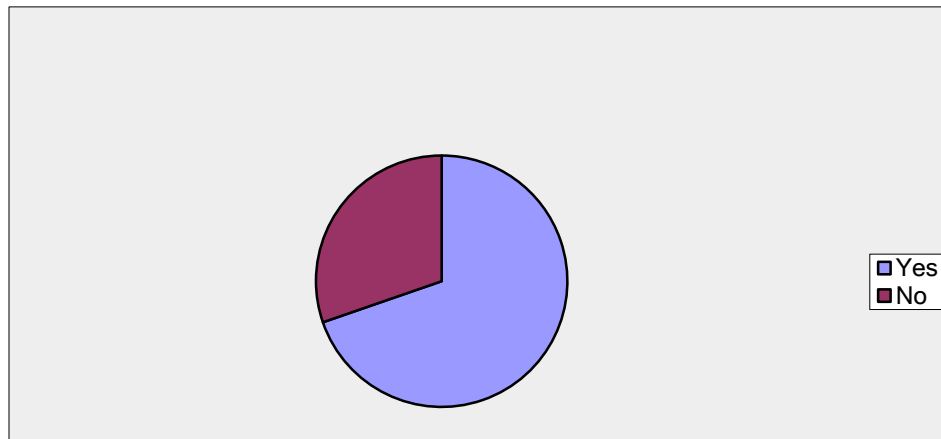
**Q6. Do you feel confident and well-informed about employment support programs for newcomers in order to provide necessary information/referral to clients?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	57.6%	19
No	15.2%	5
Not sure	27.3%	9
If not, what would help you to feel more confident and well-informed to refer them to appropriate programs?		10
<i>answered question</i>		<b>33</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>0</b>

	Comments:
1	I need more professional development, networking opportunities, trainings
2	We need a centralized system that can accommodate different needs. A one door step for referrals when YMCA do the assessment. Client could have access to programs depend on their areas of expertise and English requirements and can apply for these programs. We have a lot of agencies with similar responses to different needs while it could be done differently.
3	It would be nice to have one main site that list all services that are available.
4	Professional development, information sessions, webinars delivered to EO agencies from government organizations, regulatory bodies and ELT/OSLT/Bridging program service providers. Enhancement of online database to access program information. Career paths and factsheets such as the current Ontario Immigration - Bridging Programs website.
5	1) Regular flow of information from a center that distributes information in regards to programs/services for newcomers 2) Conduct regular meetings with front line workers as they are the liaison between clients and service providers
6	General information workshops for front-line staff--not only those privileged to attend LIP and other community meetings.
7	More training opportunities and partnerships with agencies and organization serving newcomers in employment readiness
8	There are so many programs all with different requirements so it would be good to have a map of what is out there and how each program fills a niche and what supports each type might require.

**Q7. Do you have opportunities to attend training, workshops, information sessions and professional development opportunities which support you in being an effective/knowledgeable service provider?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	69.7%	23
No	30.3%	10
<i>answered question</i>		<b>33</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>0</b>



**Q8. If you answered "No" to the previous question, please explain the reason/s. Check all that apply**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Lack of time	70.0%	7
Lack of information	30.0%	3
Other (please specify)		8
<i>answered question</i>		<b>10</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>0</b>

	Comments:
1	Both above apply as well as funding does not allow attending professional development in the areas of trauma work with refugees and immigrants.
2	We don't have much opportunity to attend trainings.
3	Agency doesn't provide access to professional development
4	Lack of emphasis given by management in developing staff

**Q9. Have you participated in any information sessions or professional development opportunities related to understanding and connecting with various employment support programs for internationally trained professionals?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	54.5%	18
No	45.5%	15
If YES, how useful was the training/project/event for you? ( Are you applying the knowledge acquired through the training in your work?). How could the training be strengthened (e.g. practical tools, theoretical knowledge, etc)?	45.5%	15
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>33</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>0</b>

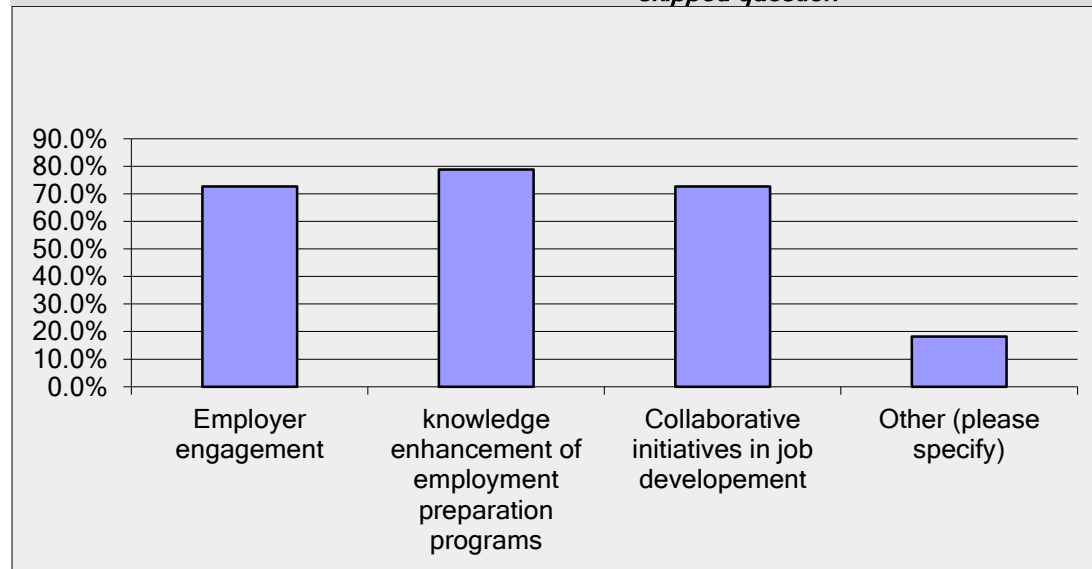
	Comments:	Response percentage
1	The knowledge is being applied; but I need to update my knowledge on regular basis	
2	<b>Licensing in Ontario's Regulated Professions by Global Experience Ontario was very useful</b>	<b>30%</b>
3	The trainings are useful; I apply knowledge in my daily work.	
4	IEP conference: I had an opportunity to learn contradiction on occupational demand by CIC perspective and actual job opportunities for Newcomers.	
5	Through the workshop I have been given the skeleton of the entire operation, in terms of getting newcomers ready for their career in Canada. I have been given information on many programs and tools to use in the process of serving our clients better by providing them with alternative choices as well.	
6	Have attended recently a 2 day Training Workshop on "Journey to Promote Mental Health Advanced Session". It was very useful. I can apply the new skills i gained when working with newcomers.	
7	Have attended recently a 2 day Training Workshop on "Journey to Promote Mental Health Advanced Session". It was very useful. I can apply the new skills i gained when working with newcomers.	

**Q10. Would you be interested in receiving training, professional development and networking opportunities in delivering the best practice services for newcomers and internationally trained professionals?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	97.0%	32
No	3.0%	1
<i>answered question</i>		<b>33</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>0</b>

**Q11. If you answered yes to the previous question, please check all that applies:**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Employer engagement	72.7%	24
knowledge enhancement of employment preparation programs	78.8%	26
Collaborative initiatives in job development	72.7%	24
Other (please specify)	18.2%	6
<i>answered question</i>		<b>32</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>0</b>



	Comments:
1	I have been dealing with a great number of new Syrian refugees who are desperately looking for job. Creating opportunities for these clients and their families are very crucial to me
2	Employment preparation service providers need to do more outreach to settlement workers
3	Business partnerships with non-EO funded opportunities so as not to compete for clients
4	General information so we can offer it to folks that come to our site and to our volunteers and placement students. also we might want to partner

**Q12. Does your organization have an employer recognition program in place?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	63.6%	21
No	36.4%	12
If Yes, how does your organization recognize their champion employers?		17
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>33</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>0</b>

	Comments:	Response Percentage
1	By hosting employer appreciation event annually	<b>35%</b>
2	Consistent support in meeting their needs and employers' appreciation events	11%
3	Employer appreciation day: invite employers that have connection to our program to the event and have an opportunity to introduce them to all ES staff	11%
4	By nomination and feedback	11%
5	Long service award	21%
6	An Employer Breakfast	11 %

**Q13. Does your organization have an idea or a project in the pipeline, or an existing program, which you would like to develop further in partnership with other organizations?**

	Comments:
1	Mentorship for internationally trained professionals
2	Perhaps, mentorship for internationally trained professionals
3	Enhancement of partnership with LINC program would help newcomers realize the needs of language and other skills in job market.
4	Social enterprise programs which provides hands on practical training for people who are interested in learning about the skilled trades and hospitality industry. Building or connecting with organizations, companies to provide placement and training opportunities combined with in class job training and learning to enhance participant's employ-ability skills.
5	Yes; our Connector co-working space which is geared to newcomers as one of our focus communities.

**Q14. What type of effective innovative programming would you like to see created that does not currently exist in the realm of employment support services for internationally trained professionals?**

	Comments:	Percentage response
1	Practice Firm (program) should be brought back to help Newcomers gain the Canadian work experience in their respective fields	15 %
2	<b>To enhance the current programs by ensuring that newcomers have more access to paid internship opportunities.</b>	47%
3	More volunteering opportunities so that they can get the Canadian work experiences. Incentive to encourage more mentors in the mentorship program. Have individuals who have received mentorship to give back to newcomers	5%
4	Let's return to Job Finding Clubs and more bridging programs	5%
5	More support for medical professions	5%
6	Individual Employment Counseling designed for the newcomer clients and stronger Job Developers support; Newcomer Women program	5%
7	Better and more effective mentorship opportunities	13%
8	First and foremost putting in place effective innovative programs that will really make a difference in ITPs (Internationally Trained Professionals) require identifying the really issues that the group faces not the ones on the surface. Hence, the question should be re framed as: What issues/problems they face, what resources should be available and what are the responsibilities of newcomers themselves? The question is not as easy as it seems, one needs to go deeper to impart real change.	5%

**Q15. Please identify existing employment support services from the perspective of seniors, LGBTQ, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups:**

Please identify existing employment support services for seniors, LGBTQ, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups:	
Answer Options	Response Count
	33
<i>answered question</i>	<b>33</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>0</b>

	Comments:	Response Percent
1	<b>Not aware</b>	<b>73%</b>
2	Toronto Public Health, Toronto Public Libraries	
3	ES, March of Dimes, WESP	
4	WESP, Career Edge, LYVE, Employment Service (JMPI)	
5	519, Working Women's Center	
6	Specialized services available to enhance support such as JOIN, CCRW, Ability Edge through Career Edge, March of Dimes, CMHA, CHS. Services for women and including women experiencing abuse (MicroSkills, YWCA). Services for LGBTQ clients including The 519.	
7	These are few programs for LGBTQ and people with disability but I am not aware of program for senior	
8	ODSP (Ontario Disability Support Program)	
9	Dixon Hall Employment Services collaborates with the 519 Community Centre to offer excellent employment support programs for LGBTQ community Toronto March of Dimes offer employment programs funded by ODSP to support persons with disabilities Employment ACTION- Employment services offered at ACT (Aids Committee of Toronto) funded by ODSP, is an employment program specifically supporting persons living with HIV and addresses stigma, barriers to employment, and works with WSIB to provide worker's contract negotiations, training and supporting employers in creating accessible and safe work places for persons living with HIV, and Anti Oppression training	
10	Medical Barriers to Employment, CLT has many programs, most LGBTQ programs are downtown except for Access Alliance, Houselink Community Homes works with people living with mental health and addictions, Fred Victor as well, (there are lots of places like this mainly in the downtown area). For seniors I don't know of any services for employment at all. WESP is also a great organization	

The TNLIP staff is working on collating an inventory listing existing employment support services for seniors, LGBTQ, persons with disabilities.

**Q16. Please identify current gaps in employment support services for seniors, LGBTQ, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups:**

Please identify current gaps in employment support services for seniors, LGBTQ, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups:	
Answer Options	Response Count
	33
<i>answered question</i>	<b>33</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>0</b>

	<b>Comments:</b>	Response Percent
1	more specific resources for these groups such as placement opportunities, employer connections	<b>43%</b>
2	There isn't much outside of the downtown area; so the inner suburbs could use more resources. Also, many organizations do not openly support these groups, especially LGBTQ populations and when they do it is usually more focused on youth	6%
3	Persons dealing with mental health challenges	6%
4	More programs and training support for people over 45.	<b>15%</b>
5	Lack of sensitivity and understanding of accessibility issues within most organizations and employers are major barrier to this issue.	6%
6	There are limited programs to address clients who are seniors and need to address concerns of retraining, updating their skills and potential employers flexible to the client's needs of limited work hours, limited job requirements, etc	6%
7	Employment counselors are not trained to professionally serve these clients. They are also not informed on the needs of these clients and the employers that could accommodate these needs. This is why clients become discouraged from the lack of interest the counselors have towards their cases.	6%
8	No specific programs targeted to Mature workers, seniors--present in the old Employment model prior to 2010	6%
9	Agencies are often community specific, i.e. newcomer support organizations, LGBTQ organizations, seniors organizations, youth organizations, women's organizations etc. There are also sub agencies which supports communities who are even more specific (i.e. LGBTQ/Youth/Newcomer/ agencies offering community specific programs). Each agency has valuable information and resources which can be shared with other agencies to create collaborative partnerships and best practices for the community sector all around by offering training and education on best practices. This would help to fill the gaps in employment support services of barriers, solutions and resources for agencies and provide the possibility of collaborations, partnerships and service delivery optimization.	6%

**Q17. How can Toronto North Local Immigration Partnership support you in the work you are doing (e.g. training opportunities, research, piloting a project in your community, etc)?**

How can Toronto North Local Immigration Partnership support you in the work you are doing (e.g. training opportunities, research, piloting a project in your community, etc)?

Answer Options	Response Count
	33

	<b>Comments:</b>	Response Percent
<b>1</b>	overall list of community services with different agencies , updates of programs running	
<b>2</b>	Hosting information session, professional development opportunities	<b>52 %</b>
<b>3</b>	To be easily accessible to community resources	
<b>4</b>	Resource sharing, updating other community program about new programs	<b>22%</b>
<b>5</b>	At this moment, helping us network, advertise and partner-up with other organizations who help pre-arrivals will help us fulfill our role in helping pre-arrivals prepare and make informed decisions.	
<b>6</b>	Provide information on research so that the agency can plan accordingly	<b>7%</b>
<b>7</b>	Establishing an information warehouse (on-line) much like our former YMCA Information Warehouse	2%
<b>8</b>	Government should make sure companies to hire certain numbers of people who belong to these groups	2%
<b>9</b>	Help support LGBTQ+ inclusivity in the inner suburbs where it is scarier to come out. A campaign or training for agencies working outside the traditional "core" of Toronto would be great.	2%
<b>10</b>	Networking, advocating for a collaborative (instead existing highly competitive) model of providing services by government funded organization. The clients must be a priority not the contract's target!	2%
<b>11</b>	providing more funds towards community engagement programs and co-sponsorship /subsidy for job opportunities through settlement programs.	2%
<b>12</b>	Agency and organizational partnerships, collaborations and working groups - Collaborative programs and projects in areas of employment and support services - More research surveys like these which asks for input and contribution from a diverse range of communities including service providers, residents and community services users, government and politicians, policy and decision makers. Everyone who plays a part needs to be involved in contributing to the movement	2%
<b>13</b>	Consolidate information about existing programs and constantly update the list for referrals, advocate on behalf of organizations to create new programs addressing service gaps	<b>7%</b>